

## Message Text

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11

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-01 SY-05 USSS-00 FBIE-00 PM-04

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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R 121840Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 649

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT AU PRINCE 2336

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINR PINS PGOV HA

SUBJ: MEDIA CALL ATTACK ON SICLAIT AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

REF: PAUP 2313

1. IN CONTRAST TO THE NEWS BLACKOUT ON THE HAITI AIR INTER HIJACKING INCIDENT (PAUP 2317, 2296), LOCAL MEDIA GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO MEDICAL INTERN RENE TOUSSAINT'S ATTACK ON REGIE DU TABAC DIRECTOR HENRI SICLAIT (REFTEL). NEWSPAPERS AND TV CONFIRMED THAT TOUSSAINT NOT ONLY HAD AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE WITH TIMER (HOMEMADE BOMB), BUT PULLED A .38 REVOLVER ON SICLAIT, WHICH WENT OFF IN HIS ENSUING STRUGGLE WITH SICLAIT'S BODYGUARD. FORTUNATELY NOBODY WAS HIT, BUT TOUSSAINT WAS INJURED BECAUSE "HIS HEAD HIT THE WALL" DURING THE MELEE. (AND, AS LE MATIN DEADPANDED, THE USUAL ASSORTMENT OF REGIE EMPLOYEES AND FAVOR-SEEKERS ALWAYS SEEN WAITING IN THE REGIE'S OUTER OFFICE HASTILY TOOK TO THEIR HEELS UPON HEARING THE GUN-FIRE AND STRUGGLE INSIDE SICLAIT'S OFFICE.) SICLAIT WAS DESCRIBED AS HAVING BEEN QUITE EMOTIONAL JUST AFTER THE ATTACK, BUT SOON REGAINED HIS HABITUAL CALM, JOINING JUSTICE SECRETARY JEANTY AND INTERIOR SECRETARY BLANCHET TO DISCUSS THE INCIDENT IN JEANTY'S OFFICE ACROSS THE STREET.

2. THE MEDIA CLAIMED THAT TOUSSAINT WAS SEEN BEFORE THE  
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ATTACK GETTING OUT OF A TAXI WITH TWO OTHER YOUNG MEN.

THE TAXI DRIVER AND SEVERAL OTHER PEOPLE WERE SUBSEQUENTLY APPREHENDED, BUT IT IS UNCLEAR IF TOUSSAINT'S TWO COMPANIONS WERE AMONG THEM. TOUSSAINT, IN ADDITION TO BEING A POPULAR MEDIAL STUDENT, NOW INTERN, ALSO GAINED WIDER RENOWN AS A PART-TIME ANNOUNCER ON TWO LOCAL RADIO STATIONS, ALONG WITH OCCASIONAL STINTS AS M.C. AT NIGHTCLUBS ON WEEKENDS. (HIS WIFE, A FRENCHWOMAN, HAS HAD AT LEAST ONE SHOW ON LOCAL TELEVISION.) THE MEDIA WISHED TOUSSAINT A SPEEDY RECOVERY SO THAT THE PUBLIC CAN LEARN HIS YET BAFFLING MOTIVES FOR ATTEMPTING TO KILL A "MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT".

3. COMMENT - THE POSSIBILITY THAT TOUSSAINT MIGHT HAVE HAD ACCOMPLICES IS BEING TREATED MATTER-OF-FACTLY, AND SO FAR DOES NOT RPT NOT SEEM TO HAVE PROVOKED AN OVERREACTION ON THE GOH'S PART. NO EXTRA SECURITY PRECAUTIONS ARE VISIBLE IN THE CITY. FOR WHAEVER IT IS WORTH, SICLAIT CLEARLY IS NOT POPULAR EVEN WITH OTHERWISE FAWNING JOURNALISTS, SOME OF WHOM IN PRIVATE POINT OUT THAT WHATEVER TOUSSAINTS ACTUAL MOTIVES, SICLAIT PERSONIFIES IN THE EYES OF MOST HAITIANS THE TYPE OF CORRUPTION DENOUNCED IN THE CUSTOMS AND STAMP FRAUD SCANDALS. THOMSON

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